

WHAT IS AN ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE?

Advance Medical Directives are legal documents that state your decisions regarding your health care. Advance medical directives become effective when you are unable to make health care decisions.

There are two types of advance medical directives: a Living Will and a Durable Health Care power of attorney.

WHAT IS A LIVING WILL?

A Living Will is a legal document prepared by a person when the person is competent that instructs *physicians and health care workers* to administer, withhold, or withdraw life-sustaining treatment in the event of a terminal, incurable, or irreversible medical condition.

WHAT IS A DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE?

A durable power of attorney for health care (also known as “medical power of attorney”) is a legal document in which you name an individual to act as your agent with legal authority to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to do so. Your agent has the power to make a broad range of health care decisions on your behalf because “health care” includes any treatment, service, or procedure to maintain, diagnose, or treat a physical or mental condition.

You can designate anyone (a spouse, relative, or good friend) you trust as your agent. In addition to “agent”, this person is frequently referred to as your “proxy” or “surrogate decision-maker”.

WHY SHOULD I PUT MY WISHES IN WRITING?

There are two significant benefits to advance medical care planning:

First, it allows you to exercise control and autonomy over your life even after you lose the ability to directly participate in the decision-making process.

Second, advance planning diminishes the anxiety and confusion surrounding choices to be made by your doctors, family members, and friends. Written documents indicating your wishes will help your doctor, family, and friends to know what medical treatment you do or do not want when you cannot express them yourself.

SHOULD I HAVE BOTH KINDS OF ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVES?

Yes! In most cases, it is a good idea to have both types of advance medical directives. The living will is only applicable to end of life decisions in the event you have a terminal, incurable, or irreversible medical condition. By having a durable power of attorney for medical care, in addition to the living will, you will give your chosen agent the legal authority to make medical care decisions for you in all other medical situations when you are unable to communicate your desires yourself.

WHO SHOULD I TELL ABOUT MY ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

Before you prepare any advance medical directive, you should discuss your medical treatment wishes with your physician, close family members, and the person you choose as your agent.

Your medical record should contain a copy of your living will and/or durable power of attorney for health care. Additionally, you should give a copy of your durable power of attorney for health care to the person you named as your agent.

You should also bring a copy of your advance medical directives with you any time you are admitted to a hospital.

AM I REQUIRED TO HAVE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

No, you are not required by law or Army Regulation or clinic policy to have an advance medical directive in order to receive care. However, an advance medical directive is the most effective way to ensure desires concerning medical treatment are honored if you become unable to communicate your choices to those providing your medical care.

CAN I CHANGE MY ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

You can change or revoke your advance medical directives at any time. If you do so, it is crucial that you update your medical record and tell your physician and family members, along with anyone you have designated as your agent.

WHAT IF MY DOCTOR AND I DO NOT AGREE ABOUT MY TREATMENT?

Your doctor will treat you according to professionally accepted medical standards. If you and your doctor do not agree about your medical treatment, you have the right to request to be seen by another doctor.

HOW CAN I HAVE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE PREPARED?

The form is available from our Patient Administration Office. The military legal assistance attorneys can assist you with completing this form. For more information, call the Fort Detrick Legal Assistance at 301-619-2065.

It is important to remember that you are a member of your health care team. Your wishes about your care are important to your doctor and the other health care professionals. They can serve you best if you continue to talk with them and with your family throughout your health care.

For more information visit the state of Maryland website at:

<http://www.oag.state.md.us/healthpol/AdvanceDirectives.htm>

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Legal Assistance Office (301) 619-2065

Patient Representative (301) 619-6918

Life Ministry / Chaplain (301) 619-7371

YOUR PHYSICIAN'S NAME IS:

THE ADVANCE DIRECTIVE FOR PATIENTS



**Barquist Army Health Clinic
1434 Porter Street
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702**